

Bonneville Power Administration

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BPA to cut danger trees along highway 101 in Washington state

PORTLAND, Ore. - The Bonneville Power Administration will remove trees threatening the operation of an 18-mile transmission line near the Washington coast. The work will be along a line that parallels highway 101 between the communities of Raymond and Cosmopolis, Wash.

The work is scheduled to begin early in July and continue into the fall of this year.

BPA Forester Kathy Stephenson says the operation is designed to remove danger trees; those trees that, if they fell, would hit and damage transmission lines and towers. The trees also threaten the safety of our line crews who have to work along this line in dangerous conditions every year, Stephenson explains. This is the third-worst line in our system for outages. Falling trees have knocked this line out of service 91 times in the last ten years.

Stephenson said that trees would be cut along only a portion of the 18-mile line. Where danger trees are removed and protective zones widened, she says, BPA will replant with Douglas fir, which is a more stable native species. Unstable trees could be removed in areas 175 feet or more from the transmission line. Stephenson estimates that the logging and replanting project will affect about 100 acres.

The 115,000-volt line passes through a narrow 50-foot-wide right of way, 80 percent of which crosses timbered land owned by the Weyerhaeuser Company. The primary species in the area is hemlock, which, according to Stephenson, is densely stocked, shallow rooted and subject to root rot. The rain and windstorms that are common to the area can easily bring the trees down.

Stephenson said, This old transmission line was originally built in the 1920s. BPA bought it in the 1940s, and, even though it has been upgraded, the narrow right of way and rapidly growing trees are constant maintenance challenges.

The transmission line is one of only two BPA lines that serve the communities of Raymond and South Bend, Wash. Stephenson commented that improving sections of the right of way by removing danger trees would enhance the reliability of service to these communities.

At times the logging or access road construction operations will block highways 101 and 107 and some of the county roads in the area. Some delays can be expected.

Some of the roadwork along the line will include replacing old culverts with new structures that permit fish passage and enhance habitat.

BPA conducted a review of the environmental impacts that could result from this project. Recommendations from various state and federal agencies have been incorporated into the project plan. BPA also consulted with tribes with interests in the area and conducted a cultural resources survey.

For information about the project, contact:
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